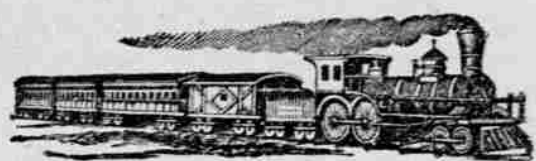


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# THE ORIGINAL ADAM



J. Adam Bede. Who Achieves with a Smile What Some Men Cannot Hew with a Sword.

Let the stodgy statesmen, who think in cubes and talk in rectangles, tell it that a sense of humor is a fatal impediment to a career in Congress. "Get a reputation as a humorist," they say, "and you will never amount to anything."

That may be true; but the stodgy statesmen never seem to think how little they amount to themselves. They exclaim against a story as an illustration for a speech, but they all try to tell a story or two when they are talking, and they make a mess of it. There are some excellent precedents for story-telling in our history. Lincoln was somewhat of an anecdotalist, and there have been a few others. Still, the dull and deadly statesman does not see it in that light. "Look at Sunset Cox," they say. "He was a man of great parts, but he was a humorist, and see what became of him." Well, what did become of him? He died and there is a statue of him in New York, erected by the letter-carriers for his successful efforts in getting them something like the wages they should have. "Be ware of the fate of John Allen!" shout the stodgy ones. Sad fate, John Allen! Served many years in the House, had more friends than any other man there, had more fun than any other, had a place waiting for him as soon as he quit, and is now living in his cotton plantation in Tupelo and still having fun.

There are no statues to the stodgy statesmen in New York or anywhere else, so far as is known. They come with corrugated brows, last a few sessions, go home and stand around solemnly until they die. They cannot afford to joke. Oh, no, it would ruin their careers, and that is the greatest joke of all the jokes there are!

Notwithstanding this weight of opinion, this heavy verdict against humor, Congress always has a member who defies the superstition. The humorist of the present House is J. Adam Bede, of Minnesota. Bede is not only a pretty fair funny-man, but a beneficent Creator mapped him out physically for the part. He is a small man, with a wrinkled-apple sort of a face. He looks like an anecdote. The fun bubbles out of him naturally. It is mostly of the true American style. He is lavish with exaggerated smiles. His metaphors are grotesque. He makes some excellent epigrams and, with it all, he sees the bright side of everything and talks about it. The sun is always shining for Bede.

He is an Ohio product. After he finished school he worked in many States as a reporter. He finally landed in Duluth, and has had various newspapers there. He was a Republican in his early days, but being versatile, he went to the Democratic party in the first Cleveland campaign. This transference of political fealty got him a United States marshalship from President Cleveland, and he hung on to the Democratic party until the money issue arose. Then he shifted back to the Republican party and, as he says in his biography in the Congressional Directory, "Decided to come to Congress as a Republican." They twitted Bede about that when he was making his first important speech in the House. "Haven't you been a Democrat?" John Sharp Williams asked him. "I have," Bede responded promptly. "I want to say finally that I voted the Democratic ticket a few times and I know how hard it is. My first vote and my last vote were Republican, but, in the mean time, I voted the Democratic

ticket—and it is necessarily the mean time when you do a thing like that."

He is as shrewd as he is funny. Mark Hanna heard him speak and sent for him to come to Ohio when Herrick was making his first campaign for governor. Bede spent six weeks in and about Cleveland, making several speeches every day and getting great crowds. When he had finished, Hanna asked Bede what he owed him, thinking to pay him liberally for his time.

"Oh," said Bede, "I will call it square if you will pay my expenses and see that I am put on the Rivers and Harbors Committee when I go to Congress."

Hanna promised and kept his word, and Bede is on that committee now. He is active in rivers and harbors work, for Duluth needs a lot of that sort of money. An expert was before the committee a short time ago and was talking theories.

"Here, here!" broke in Bede. "There are sixteen lawyers on this committee and two gentlemen, Lorimer and myself. Now you have given these lawyers all the theories they can digest, please contribute a fact or two to the other two members."

Bede made his first hit in Congress when, in January, 1904, he spoke for the first time at length. He was advising the Democrats to join with the Republicans and nominate Roosevelt. Turning to the minority, he said:

"You Democrats cannot elect anything. The election this year will be nothing but a supplemental census." They laughed so much at that that the austere Hemenway, who was in charge of the floor, gave Bede all the time he desired, and Bede used it to show the country that he was amply able to succeed John Allen as the House humorist.

Bede's humor isn't refined. It is prairie humor and smells of the soil. He jokes about the common things of life and would pain a literary person who demands polish with his jokes. He was talking one day about the diversified agricultural industries of Minnesota. He told about the farmers turning from exclusive wheat-growing to dairy and similar pursuits:

"I have gone into a little place in the backwoods where they kept two or three cows and set the milk on a shelf in the living-room, where they discussed Democratic politics and chewed tobacco and did a lot of things. When they brought their butter to market you could taste every member of the family."

That is Artemus-Wardsy enough to suit the most strenuous demand for "native" humor. That is Bede's kind. He can string paragraphs like that together for hours at a time, and every time he gets up in the House he has a crowd to hear him, although most of the statesmen deprecate humor and say it is the ruination of a career, and, by the same token, empty the House, instead of filling it, when they talk.

Bede took his six children up to the White House one day. "What have you here?" the President asked.

"My string of Bedes," the Minnesota man replied.

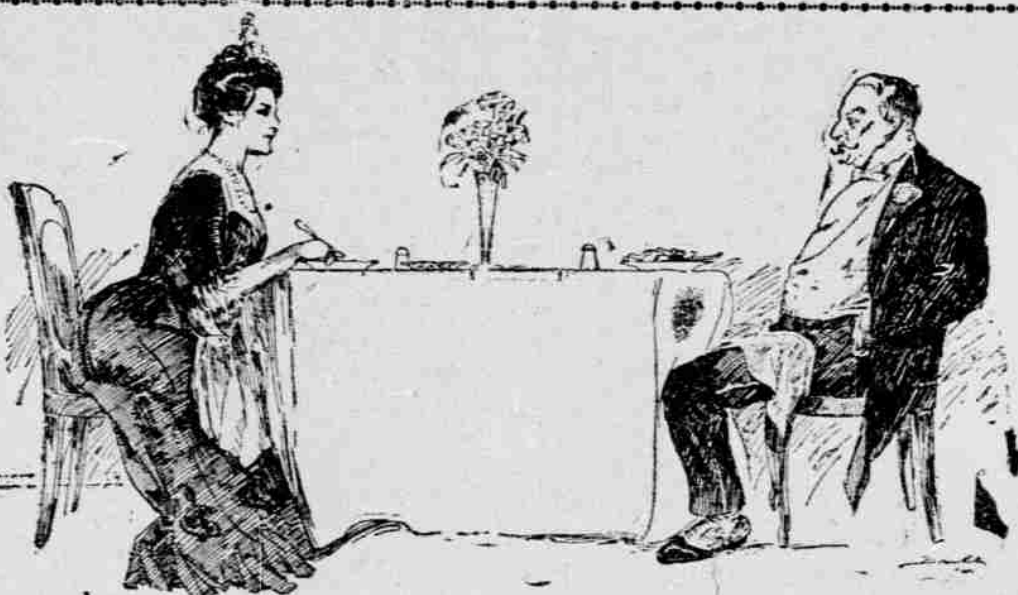
Not very intellectual, was it? No, nor is any of Bede's humor, but everybody laughed at it, and, when you come to think of it, that is what humor is for.

## JAPANIZED ENGLISH.

A Fort street Japanese yesterday put out the following sign: "4th July. Excellent fireworks—Made by the order."

Another enterprising Japanese storekeeper has a square lantern above the sidewalk and over his door. On the white glass sides are two inscriptions, one at the top and the other at the bottom. There is no punctuation, and the passerby is told that inside he can get:

Ice Cream  
Bath.



SUB-ROSA.

"Major, do you like French dressing?"  
"On the stage, madam, but not in the home."

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